

**PSYCHOPROPHYLACTIC PREPARATION FOR PAINLESS CHILDBIRTH**—Isidore Bonstein, M.D., Grune & Stratton, Inc., 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y., 1958. 143 pages, \$2.50.

This little book is an effort to explain the French adaptation of natural childbirth, particularly as practised in Paris by Lamaze, who claims his psychoprophylactic method is based on Pavlov's conditioned reflex. After a rather confusing description of some of Pavlov's experiments, and some random comments on the nature of pain, the major part of the volume is devoted to eight lectures to be given to pregnant women at weekly intervals during the final ten weeks of gestation. The usual breathing and relaxing exercises are included for homework, and it is repeatedly stressed that the patient must learn to "release the perineum" on command. When this is done properly, we are told, the birth of the head may stimulate an intense thrill similar to that of orgasm.

It is pointed out that the failure rate with this method is around 10 per cent. Failures allegedly are due to inadequate study by the obstetrician, poor teaching techniques, or to ignorant hospital personnel who insist on using the word "pain" in the maternity area. The author implies that it may be difficult to achieve good results for women doctors, wives of doctors, or nurses.

The demand for this book is not likely to be great. Those now using the natural childbirth system will be familiar with the author's techniques; others will not be persuaded to abandon their present practices.

CHAS. E. McLENNAN

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**REVIEW OF PHYSIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY**—Sixth Edition, 1957. Harold A. Harper, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Physiological Chemistry, University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco. Lange Medical Publications, P.O. Box 1215, Los Altos, California. 376 pages, \$4.50.

This is the sixth edition of this work, and the author's expressed aim is that it will meet the needs of physicians who are preparing for state and specialty boards, as well as those of the practicing physician who wishes to keep up-to-date. These aims have been reasonably well met in that the book is clearly organized and the material is simply presented. The charts, tables, and schematic representations are well done. The book is most accurately described as a quick reference or review, and would not satisfy anyone who wished to go deeply into the many large topics discussed. It is too bad that gross errors of fact occasionally creep in. For example, the statement that the macrocytic anemia of liver disease is owing to failure to store erythrocyte maturation factor is many years out of date (page 263). There is the further statement that in liver disease declines in the production of fibrinogen and prothrombin will be reflected in a prolongation of the blood clotting time. This is seldom true for fibrinogen, and probably never true for prothrombin (page 263). The color index is briefly discussed rather than the concept and expression which has supplanted it the last two decades, the mean corpuscular volume, hemoglobin, and hemoglobin concentration (page 138). On page 17 there is a curious paragraph devoted to "Immunological Polysaccharides," with those of bacterial origin alone being discussed. It would seem difficult to mention this subject at all without dwelling on blood group polysaccharides which certainly have received the majority of attention in this area. But aside from these objections the book should be very useful to the occasional rather than the steady student of physiological chemistry, which is, after all, to say that it will meet the needs of the majority of physicians.

WILLIAM P. CREGER, M.D.

**ALCOHOLISM**—Arnold Z. Pfeffer, M.D., formerly Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, College of Medicine of New York University. Grune & Stratton, New York, 1958. 98 pages, \$6.50.

This book of less than a hundred pages should be read by all who have in their practice any dealings with alcoholic patients, and this really includes all physicians. It can also be read with profit by industrialists and all employers, since it is strongly oriented to the problem of the alcoholic in industry. The present day concepts of the etiology of alcoholism, and the resources at the command of the physician in the treatment of the disease, are clearly set forth without bias or prejudice. The author's experience in dealing with the alcoholic is plainly evident from his description of the alcoholic personality. The whole approach is from the commonsense angle, and although reading the book will in no wise equip the physician to treat the alcoholic, it will enable him to guide such patients to a source of adequate treatment. It is to be highly recommended.

HENRY NEWMAN, M.D.

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**HUMAN INFERTILITY**—C. Lee Buxton, M.D., Med. Sc.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Yale University School of Medicine; and Anna L. Southam, M.D., Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University; with a chapter on Endometrial Diagnosis by Earl T. Engle, Ph.D., Professor of Anatomy, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., 49 East 33rd St., New York, 1958. 229 pages, \$7.50.

In this nicely printed and well illustrated volume, Buxton and Southam relate their experiences with some fifteen hundred infertile couples whom they followed for from one to ten years. It is a common sense, down to earth book with a pleasing literary style and exceptionally clear tables. The data have been subjected to careful statistical analysis wherever indicated. In addition to the usual discussions of ovarian, tubal, endometrial, and cervical factors in infertility, there are brief but thoughtful sections dealing with psychological factors and sociological implications. The histological details of the endometrial cycle are well described and depicted in a special chapter by the late Earl T. Engle, to whom the book is dedicated.

The authors of this monograph must be complimented for their unbiased look at a new clinical specialty which has attracted considerable numbers of uncritical practitioners, many of whom have not maintained what Buxton aptly calls an even balance between enthusiasm and intellectual skepticism. Anyone who has occasion to deal with the infertile couple should read this book from cover to cover and apply its lessons to his own experiences.

CHAS. E. McLENNAN, M.D.

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**CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES**—Third Edition—Revised and enlarged—David Scherf, M.D., F.A.C.P., Professor of Clinical Medicine, New York Medical College, and Linn J. Boyd, M.D., F.A.C.P., Professor and Director of Medicine, New York Medical College. Grune & Stratton, Inc., 381 Fourth Ave., New York, 1958. 829 pages, \$17.75.

This textbook on cardiology, now in its third edition, attests to its popularity. The scope of the book has increased due to new discoveries and recent advances in therapy. The advantages of this text to the cardiologist are twofold: It has an excellent bibliography which includes many European references usually unavailable to American students because of the language barrier; and it is a concise, clinical outline in treatment of the various cardiological problems.